

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus that provides quantitative and qualitative recommendations as the result of an request by a user, said apparatus comprising:

5 a server engine, said server engine constructed and arranged to accept requests from a user and send results thereto;

a pricing database, said pricing database constructed and arranged to store pricing information and to retrieve pricing information;

10 an advisor database, said advisor database constructed and arranged to store advisor information and to retrieve advisor information;

a catalog database, said catalog database constructed and arranged to store product information and to retrieve product information;

a content relationship manager, said content relationship manager constructed and arranged to store and to retrieve client relationship data;

15 a correlation engine;

a pricing function module operatively connected to said pricing database and said correlation engine;

an advisor function module operatively connected to said advisor database and said correlation engine;

a catalog module operatively connected to said catalog database and said correlation engine; and

a correlation engine database operatively connected to said correlation engine, said correlation engine database constructed and arranged to store a result of said correlation engine and requests from said user;

wherein when said user submits a request to said server engine, said server engine forwards said request to said correlation engine, said correlation engine therein retrieves pricing information from said pricing database through said pricing function module, advisory information from said advisor database through said advisor function module, catalog information from said catalog database through said catalog module and correlates all of said information to form said response to said user.

2. An computer system comprising:

a server engine, the server engine constructed and arranged to accept requests from a client device;

- 15 a correlation engine operative with the server engine;
- a pricing function module operative with the correlation engine;
- an advisor function module operative with the correlation engine;
- a catalog operative with the correlation engine;

wherein upon receiving a request from the client device via the server engine, the correlation engine references the pricing function module, the advisor function module, and the catalog to formulate a response to the request by ranking one or more items within the response according to one or more parameters within the request.

5 3. The computer system of claim 2 further comprising:

a database, the database operative with the correlation engine, the pricing function module, the advisor function module, and the catalog.

4. The computer system as in claim 2 further comprising a pricing database operative with the pricing function module.

10 5. The computer system as in claim 2 further comprising an advisor database operative with the advisor function module.

6. The computer system as in claim 2 further comprising a catalog database operative with the catalog.

15 7. The computer system as in claim 2 further comprising a pricing database operative with the pricing function module.

8. The computer system of claim 3, wherein the database is operative with an egate interface.

9. The computer system of claim 8, wherein the egate interface is operative with a database.

5 10. The computer system of claim 2 further comprising a client relationship manager.

11. The computer system of claim 10, wherein the client relationship manager has a customer relationship management module operative with the correlation engine.

12. The computer system of claim 11, wherein the client relationship manager is operative with client relationship data.

10 13. A method of ranking elements in a catalog according to a user-specified criteria comprising:

receiving a request from the user regarding two or more elements in the catalog;

retrieving information about each of the elements;

determining if the product is simple;

15 if the product is not simple, then obtaining advisory input from an advisory module;

determining if the pricing is simple;

if the pricing is not simple, then obtaining pricing input from a pricing module;
and

presenting the user with a list of elements that are ranked according to the
advisory input and the pricing input and that satisfy the request from the user.

5 14. A method of ranking elements in a catalog according to a user-specified criteria
comprising:

receiving a request from the user regarding two or more elements in the catalog;

retrieving information about each of the elements;

determining if the product is simple;

10 if the product is not simple, then obtaining advisory input from an advisory
module;

determining if the pricing is simple;

if the pricing is not simple, then obtaining pricing input from a pricing module;

prompting the user to input additional information based upon the advisory input

15 and the pricing input;

presenting the user with a list of elements that are ranked according to the
advisory input and the pricing input and that satisfy the request from the user.